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Editorial

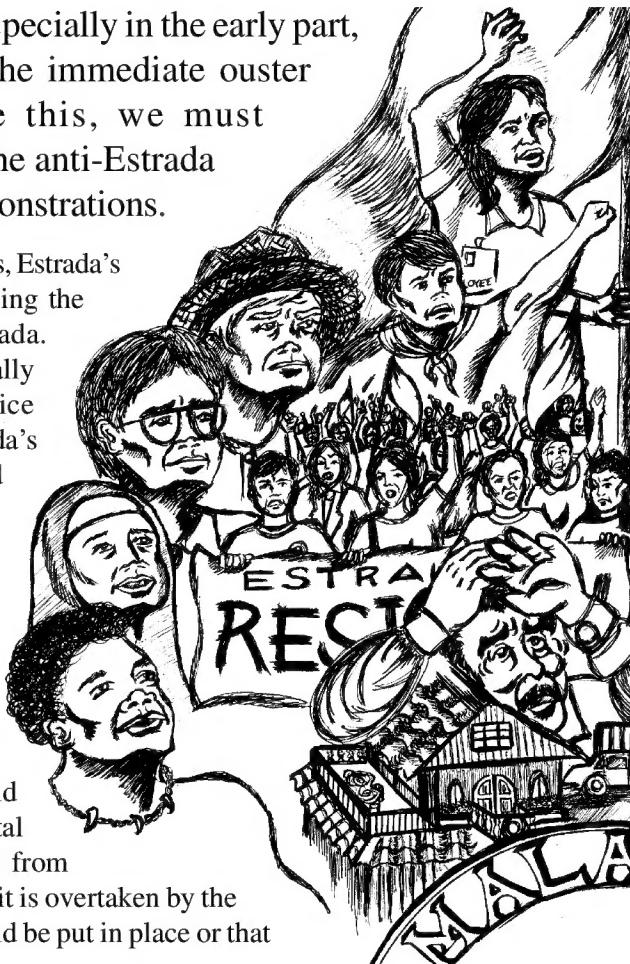
With the onset of 2001, unleash a powerful storm that shall put an end to the US-Estrada regime

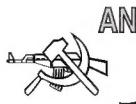
The situation in the first quarter of 2001, especially in the early part, favors the carrying out of efforts for the immediate ouster of Estrada from power. To ensure this, we must continuously advance, expand and intensify the anti-Estrada mass movement and launch gigantic street demonstrations.

Up to now, despite the legal maneuverings of his lawyers, Estrada's trial at the Senate has served as a good forum for exposing the corruption, anomalies and criminal operations of Estrada. Testimony and evidence presented by witnesses, especially Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Clarissa Ocampo, vice president of Equitable-PCI Bank, have demonstrated Estrada's incessant use of his power to illegally amass wealth and immerse himself in opulence.

Nonetheless, it remains another issue altogether whether Estrada will indeed be adjudged guilty. This relies, above all, on the continued expansion of mass actions calling for Estrada's ouster. This also depends on the strength of incontrovertible evidence or direct instructions to the senators from US personnel to drop Estrada.

Without the widespread mass actions, which comprise the main factor for adjudging Estrada guilty, factors that would favor a postponement of the verdict or an Estrada acquittal would become more decisive. This would include bribes from Estrada and Danding Cojuangco, prolonging the trial until it is overtaken by the election, the possibility that new pro-Estrada senators would be put in place or that the US would change its position.





CONTENTS

- 1 Editorial:** Stir up with the onset of 2001, a powerful storm that shall put an end to the US-Estrada regime
- 3 Mobilize the broad masses of the people to deliver the death blow to the Estrada regime -- *Armando Liwanag***
- 4 The Estrada regime at the brink of death:** (4) Rapidly plummeting economic crisis(6) Puppetry, corruption and fascism
- 9 Fascist state on a rampage**
- 11 Trouble in the neocolonies**
- 12 Paving the way for an international league of people's struggles**
- 13 News of struggle**

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To ensure Estrada's ouster in the early part of 2001, we must have firm hold of the primary task of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the broad masses of the people to deal blows that shall put an end to the US-Estrada regime, in accordance with the statement this December 26 of Comrade Armando Liwanag, Chairman of the Party Central Committee. This can be implemented by combining the capability of the broad united front to arouse and mobilize millions of people and the solid organizing work being undertaken by revolutionary forces.

In this regard, we must further expand and consolidate the anti-Estrada united front. In particular, we must pay attention to reaffirming the consensus among the various forces that comprise it, that Estrada can only be ousted, primarily through the actions of millions of people and laying siege to Malacañang Palace.

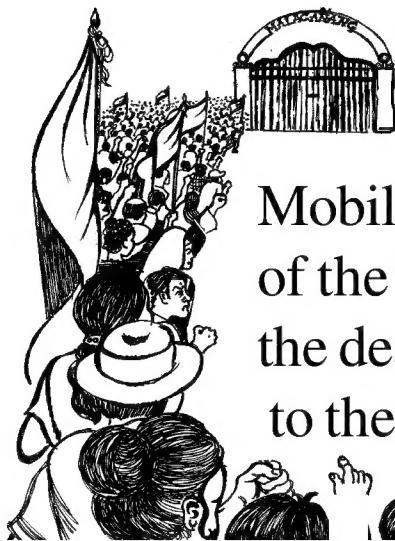
It is important to disabuse certain groups, especially among the anti-Estrada reactionaries, of the illusion that Estrada could be ousted through a judgment by the Senate without a siege of Malacañang to force him to resign. This illusion can easily fall into Estrada's scheme of prolonging the trial at the Senate using this as basis to give false promises that he would respect any kind of judgment just so the protests would die down, thus prolonging his regime.

We must demand that the trial be finished before the election campaign starts in February. We must launch gigantic demonstrations to demand the immediate rendering of judgment on Estrada based on incontrovertible testimonies and documents and to condemn any attempt by Estrada's lawyers and pro-Estrada senators to prolong the trial.

In case the Senate acquits Estrada, we must launch mass actions that shall equal or surpass the demonstrations that caused Marcos' downfall in 1986. There is even greater need to encircle Malacañang Palace should Estrada refuse to relinquish power whatever the Senate decides.

It is correct to ensure that these demonstrations are peaceful and militant. Nonetheless, this does not preclude the possibility that the thin ranks of pro-Erap loyalists will sow violence, especially certain military and police officials led by Gen. Panfilo Lacson and paid lumpen groups, against the key forces of the anti-Estrada united front or attack the mass actions. Thus, the anti-Estrada forces within the military would be justified to launch counter-moves (such as counter-surveillance or arrests of Estrada loyalists) not to establish a military junta but to support the people's moves to oust Estrada.

The Party advances the tasks to end the US-Estrada regime along with all-sidedly advancing revolutionary ►



Selected quotes

Mobilize the broad masses of the people to deliver the death blow to the Estrada regime

-Armando Liwanag

This statement of Chairperson of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines Armando Liwanag, for the Party's 32nd anniversary, was published by

Ang Bayan in a special issue dated December 26, 2000. Its Pilipino, Bisaya, Hiligaynon and English editions may be downloaded from <http://angbayan.cjb.net>.

"As we celebrate the 32nd anniversary of the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, we resolve to mobilize the broad masses of the people in order to deliver the death blow to the US-Estrada regime, strengthen all revolutionary forces and intensify all forms of revolutionary struggle."

"The Estrada regime is both the product and the aggravation of the chronic crisis of the rotten ruling system. It is a glaring proof of the

decadent and moribund character of the system that someone like Estrada has become the president of the neocolonial republic. He blends the rapacity of the imperialists, the worst of the local reactionaries and criminal syndicates."

"It is correct to focus on the culpability of Estrada and his ruling clique and the necessity of overthrowing them. But we do not lose sight of the fact that the entire ruling system has become more exploitative and oppressive because of the "free market" policy dictates

of the imperialist firms, banks and multilateral agencies such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO. These have accelerated and aggravated imperialist profit-taking, feudal and semifeastal accumulation of land and bureaucratic corruption. These have rapidly resulted in the fierce resistance of the people and the isolation of the Estrada regime."

"The economic crisis is at the base of the current political crisis. The contradictions among the reactionaries have become more bitter because the spoils available for division among them have been much reduced and the Estrada ruling clique has tended to monopolize the loot. The main beneficiaries of bureaucrat capitalism are Estrada himself, Eduardo Cojuangco, an assortment of Filipino-Chinese businessmen and Estrada's multiple families."

"The broad united front consists of the Left, Middle and anti-Estrada Right. It is a loose alliance bound by the single purpose of removing Estrada from power. It has been easier for the Left and Middle to unite with the forces of the Right, that are frankly reactionary but are anti-Estrada, than with certain grouplets that misrepresent themselves as Left but try to deflect the concentrated fire on Estrada and sabotage the broad united

► objectives. It is clear to all revolutionary forces that overthrowing Estrada is not equivalent to, but serves the overall objective of the national-democratic revolution.

To create an image of popular support and consolidate her future government, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo may declare her supposed advocacy of land reform and certain policies that supposedly defend the people's welfare. But as the new chief of the reactionary state and principal puppet of US imperialism, all these promises will fade as she implements the neocolonial and "neoliberal" policy dictates of the IMF-WB and WTO.

While the crisis of the ruling system deepens, the reactionary regime is further compelled to be subservient to the dictates of imperialism, which will in turn further

deepen the economic and political crisis. As a result, the people's basic problems will be exacerbated and their resistance will intensify in the future.

The people's united front against the new regime will be forged as rapidly as the latter exposes its true antinational and anti-democratic color. The organized and armed strength, capability and militancy that the people have accumulated in the course of resisting the Estrada regime will be put to use in fighting the new regime.

The crisis of the ruling system that is rotten to the core will not be resolved and will instead, worsen. The Party and the entire revolutionary movement stand ready to take advantage of the increasingly favorable situation to continuously advance the new-democratic revolution all over the country. AB

Rapidly plummeting economic crisis

Within only a little more than two years under the Estrada government, the Philippine national economy continuously plunged due to the blind implementation of trade and investment liberalization, privatization, denationalization and deregulation—all policy dictates of US imperialism—as well as the aggravation of feudal and semifeudal exploitation in the countryside and thoroughly worsening bureaucratic anomalies and corruption.

Estrada bears direct responsibility for the implementation of policies that have led the economy into this quagmire. He must pay for his all-out puppetry that has caused the grave economic crisis and impoverished the people. However, it is incorrect to expect that the crisis would be resolved with the ouster



of Estrada. In fact, it will worsen further in the future with the further decay of the semicolonial and semifeudal social system.

Illusions of economic growth. Even government statistics cannot deny the fact that the Philippines is undergoing a grave economic crisis. Especially this year, investments and production fell sharply, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate. Even big business doubts the 4.5% economic growth drumbeated by Estrada.

The Estrada government boasts that for the first time since 1973, a trade surplus was recorded in 1999 (\$4.294 billion). As of this September, a surplus of \$4.24 billion has been recorded.

This foreign trade surplus is decidedly deceptive. In fact, the government has made no steps to address the roots of the historic problem of unequal trade. This surplus has not resulted from any major advance in industry, local production and volume and value of exports. In fact, by September, export had slowed down to 9% (from 17% in September 1999).

This surplus is incongruous because this is an indication, above all, of the further decline in local production that is dependent on imported components

front.”

“The US-Estrada regime is both corrupt and repressive. It has used the military, police, paramilitary forces and private armed gangs to enforce the antilabor policy, deprive the peasant masses and national minorities of their land and attack mass protest actions. It has intensified military campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary mass base and forces of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).”

“Mustering a broad united front of forces against the narrowest target, which is the current ruling clique, does not mean changing the program of new-democratic

revolution and the strategic line of protracted people’s war. It means stepping up the tempo of mass protests and revolutionary resistance by which the revolutionary forces can gain strength and advance.”

“Between now and the fall of Estrada, if he were to fall soon, there is not enough time to make any radical change in the balance of forces between the armed counterrevolution and the armed revolution or to create and strengthen any governing council that can truly serve the national and democratic interests of the people.”

“The crisis of the ruling system is so grave that the new regime is under compulsion to yield further to the dictates of the imperialists and at the

same time to avoid the wrath of the people by some token measures and deceptive tactics, without which her isolation will come fast....”

“The Communist Party of the Philippines is ideologically, politically and organizationally prepared to confront the new ruling clique as this assumes the role of being the enemy of the people. The strength accumulated by the revolutionary forces and the people in the course of fighting the entire ruling system and overthrowing the US-Estrada regime will be available against the new ruling clique. The crisis of the moribund ruling system will not end but will worsen. It will continue to favor the advance of the new-democratic revolution.” **AB**

and machinery. In fact, there is nothing new in the type of products being exported and imported and their relationship to each other. The principal export products of the Philippines—electronics and electronic components, garments and garment accessories and ignition wiring sets—are all dependent on imported components and machinery. The principal imports of the Philippines are composed of electronics and electronic components, mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials and telecommunications equipment and electrical machinery—all basic components of export-oriented production.

Investments and production continue to decline. In the first part of 1999, a 71% drop in new investments was recorded. Registered investments in 1999 fell by 54% (P116.74 million, the lowest since 1994). Investment further fell by 97% in the first half of 2000 (compared to P71.5 billion in the first half of 1999). For the entire year, the figure is expected to have dropped by more than 90% (P10.6 billion), the lowest level in the past 15 years.

This July, the overall value of foreign direct investments fell by 56%. This is one of the reasons for the slowdown in external trade.

Local investments have declined by more than 98% since 1998. The continuous rise in oil prices and the devaluation of the peso against the dollar have caused sudden increases in production costs. This has resulted in business slowdowns, especially of local enterprises, including small exporting firms. By August, there were 951 enterprises in Metro Manila that were recorded to have closed shop, while 166 implemented “temporary” layoffs, job rotations and a reduction in working hours.

The rate of unemployment continues to rise. This cannot be completely concealed even by government statisticians’ magic tricks. In October, the unemployment rate reached 11.1%—the highest since 1986. While this is already considered high based on technocratic standards, the fact is the real number of unemployed is much higher than this. Everything considered, as much as 45% of the total work force are without employment.

The number of unemployed continues to rise because expansion in production is unable to keep pace with the increase in the labor force.

THE ESTRADA GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BLINDLY CARRY OUT LIBERALIZATION, PRIVATIZATION AND DEREGULATION POLICIES AND BREAK DOWN EVERY POLICY OR STATUTE THAT UPHOLDS A SOVEREIGN NATIONAL ECONOMY.

The financial crisis persists and threatens to explode anew. In 1999, dollar reserves of the Bangko Sentral were artificially boosted, primarily through the renewed entry of foreign speculators. However, the rate of capital flight is slowly increasing especially after the political crisis that exploded in October. In this regard, the value of the Philippine stock market had dropped by 53% by November.

By the end of 2000, external debt will have reached \$55.5 billion, 14% higher than in 1998. Principal and interest payments for 2000 are expected to reach \$11.11 billion, 33% more than the payments made in 1998.

The budget deficit in 1999 ballooned to P111 billion from P45 billion in 1998. By November 2000, the budget deficit had reached P114.44

billion and is expected to reach P120 billion by the end of the year. Despite the P85-billion target for next year, some government officials expect that the budget deficit will surpass that of this year. This budget deficit springs from the big shortfall in tax collections primarily brought about by the reduction in tax revenue from business which is now on the decline, aside from corruption and the wasting of government resources on unproductive expenses (such as showcase infrastructure projects, military operations and gargantuan debt servicing).

Estrada's responsibility. Even under the Ramos government, the principal statutes and policies which upheld liberalization, privatization and deregulation including the Foreign Investments Act (the law that provides incentives to foreign investors), the Bank Liberalization Law (which gives foreigners the right to establish and operate local banks) and the Mining Act of 1995 (which liberalizes the entry of foreigners in the mining industry) had already been put in place.

Still, the extent of Estrada's responsibility has not at all been diminished due to his all-out implementation of these policies. Estrada has not carried out any measure to veer away from the policy dictates of the IMF-WB-WTO, and has instead implemented them with a zeal. In order to complete the opening up of the economy, Estrada approved in March the Retail Trade Liberalization Act which opened one of the last frontiers of the national economy—retail trade—to foreign control.

At a time when other governments around the world

IN THE THROES OF DEATH

are cutting back on all-out liberalization, privatization and deregulation because of the negative effects on their economies, the Estrada government continues to blindly carry these out and break down every policy or statute that upholds a sovereign national economy.

The crisis will continue. We must take advantage of the struggle to remove Estrada from power in order to present to the Filipino people their national and democratic program especially on the economy. The call for the ouster of Estrada should include the demand to hold Estrada responsible for his crime of selling out national sovereignty. The handling of economic questions, including forwarding the principal demands of workers, peasants, fisherfolk, employees and other sectors among the toiling masses for wage increases, land reform and others, help in exposing the mendacity of Estrada's "pro-masses" stance and the need to put an end to his regime. This also clarifies the distinction between the toiling masses, on the one hand, and the reactionary opposition on the other—that are now united in the struggle against the ruling regime.

By persistently asserting these demands, the Filipino people are immediately guided as to the course of their struggle under the regime that would replace the present Estrada government. The economic crisis will continue in the coming years. As long as the semicolonial and semifeastal system prevails, the Philippines is sure to sink further into the quagmire of a never-ending crisis.

The revolutionary forces must adeptly study and clarify the historical roots of the economic crisis. The incorrect views of the reactionaries should be exposed: that the crisis has been brought about by the all-out rottenness and anomalies of the Estrada government or that the Philippines is now on the way to recovery from the crisis that the Ramos government left in its wake.

Clarifying the roots of the economic crisis is one of the ways of solidifying the gains in the struggle to overthrow the Estrada government. **AB**

Puppetry, corruption and fascism

The Estrada regime's two-and-a-half-year existence has been characterized by unbridled corruption, fascism and puppetry that have caused the unprecedented exploitation and oppression of the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses.

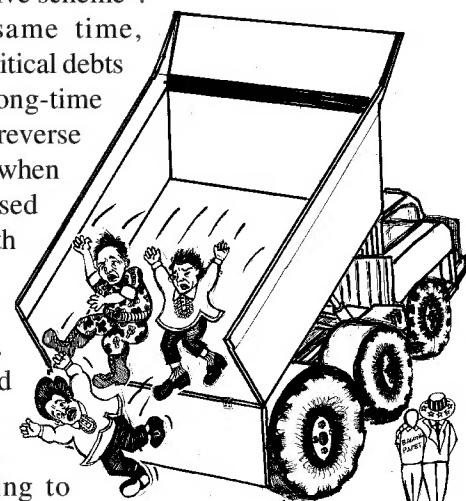
Within this relatively short period, the reactionary state under Estrada's administration has likewise been besieged by a political crisis unprecedented in its intensity—a crisis that was further set off in October when former Estrada cohort Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson exposed the breadth and depth of the regime's corruption and depravity.

Barefaced cronyism and corruption. The Estrada regime will undoubtedly go down in the history of reactionary politics in the country for its unabashed cronyism and for corruption of such scandalous proportions.

One of Estrada's first acts upon becoming president was to pay debts of gratitude to those who bankrolled his campaign and put him in power.

By the first month of his regime's existence, Estrada had restored his patron and Marcos' biggest crony Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to the board of San Miguel Corp. (SMC) and instructed government representatives in the company to elect him as SMC chair. By virtue of an executive order signed by Estrada, Cojuangco was also able to recover possession this November of the ill-gotten coco levy funds and is in the process of being absolved of charges filed against him in court. To camouflage Cojuangco's dirty landgrabbing schemes, Estrada dubbed him as the "godfather of land reform" and officially promoted his "corporative scheme".

Estrada, at the same time, proceeded to pay his political debts to the Marcoses, his long-time allies. He attempted to reverse the judgment of history when he hailed the late despised dictator as a hero. With Estrada's blessings, the Marcos family has been fully restored to power. Estrada has also colluded with the reactionary courts and revisionist renegades in continuing to



extend protection to the Marcoses so that they would not be held answerable for their grave crimes against the people, could retain their ill-gotten wealth, recover properties sequestered by government and deprive some 10,000 victims of martial rule of their just indemnification.

Through a series of decisions, Estrada has also extended favors to another major campaign contributor, the big bourgeois comprador Lucio Tan. Upon Estrada's orders, Tan was cleared in August of charges of evading payment of P25 billion in taxes. When workers of the Tan-owned Philippine Airlines (PAL) struck in September 1998, Estrada forced union leaders to sign an agreement compelling PAL workers to observe a 10-year moratorium on strikes and wage increases. Malacañang also maneuvered the forging of an agreement limiting the number of passengers that PAL rival carrier Eva Air could fly to Taiwan.

Among Estrada's other cronies are William Gatchalian, Jaime Dichavez, Jacinto Ng, Lucio Co, Mark Jimenez, Dante Tan and Charlie "Atong" Ang. All of them have been favored with contracts, import quotas and access to credit from government banks and financial institutions. In return, they have been fronting for Estrada to legitimize his illegal acquisition of various assets.

Countless members of Estrada's family, his relatives, mistresses and friends have also received assorted favors and privileges from government.

Estrada has endeavored to acquire all the perks of power with indecent haste. The congressional pork barrel was banned so that Malacañang could centralize the collection of commissions from big projects. Estrada granted pork barrel funds, however, to favored politicians from his own party and withheld resources from his rivals.

More than this, the operations of criminal syndicates were centrally directed by Estrada from Malacañang. He continued and expanded the old kidnap for ransom business that he began with Gen. Panfilo Lacson back in their days at the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission. He established Task Force Aduana to dismantle rival smuggling syndicates, especially in Subic, and monopolize the takings.

Singson has in turn exposed how Estrada centralized jueteng collections nationwide and extended protection in exchange. Not satisfied, Estrada eventually legalized jueteng (through the "Bingo 2-balls" gambling scheme designed by Atong Ang) to facilitate supervision of its operations and make it difficult for anyone else to cut into the hundreds of millions of pesos of jueteng booty.

The money-grubbing Estrada did not pass on any opportunity to have more of it. Recent reports exposed how he copped 40% (or US\$8 million) of the \$20-million ransom paid for 20 tourists abducted from Malaysia in March by Abu Sayyaf bandits. Estrada demanded a commission in exchange for his regime's participation in negotiations for the captives' release. Estrada's emissary and negotiator Robert

Aventajado himself got 10% (or US\$2 million).

The regime has been extremely corrupt to sustain the excessively luxurious lifestyle of Estrada, his family and mistresses in the midst of the people's widespread poverty. But the exposure of scandals involving his regime has also paved the way for his downfall.

Blood-stained record of fascism. Estrada had early on consolidated his regime's fascist machinery and manifested his penchant for militarist methods of suppressing the people's resistance.

He appointed as police chief his most trusted henchman Gen. Panfilo Lacson, a rabid fascist with many blood debts against the people and the revolutionary forces. Estrada granted Lacson immense powers, including appointing him as head of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force. He also established his own base within the reactionary military by promoting to leading positions such loyal followers as Gen. Angelo Reyes (chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines or AFP) and Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim (deputy AFP chief and head of the Intelligence Service of the AFP).

He signed in August 1998 the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, the first point in the substantive agenda of the peace negotiations between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). But he junked it soon after. The regime terminated the peace negotiations and eventually discarded all agreements between the NDFP and the GRP forged in almost 10 years of talks between the two panels.

ON THE VERGE OF DEATH

It was not long before the Estrada regime brazenly violated the ceasefire agreement between the GRP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). To compel the MILF to surrender, Estrada ordered tens of thousands of troops to attack not only the MILF camps in various areas of Mindanao but Moro communities as well. At the same time, the Estrada regime also seized on the Abu Sayyaf hostage-taking incidents to intensify its anti-Moro war.

The regime extended its anti-Moro war and sowed terror beyond Mindanao. In Metro Manila, two Moro workers were summarily executed and 26 innocent Moro civilians were abducted and accused of being responsible for bombings instigated by the Estrada government.

The government scuttled negotiations so it could enforce unimpeded, the counterrevolutionary Oplan Makabayan against the NDFP and Oplan Pisces Alpha against the MILF.

Unlike previous oplans of the reactionary government that gave relative stress to psychological warfare, both Oplan Makabayan and Oplan Pisces Alpha markedly emphasize largescale military operations to crush the people's armed resistance. In Southern Tagalog, one of the regions that has borne the brunt of the regime's militarist attacks, the Estrada government, in its first two years, had exceeded the 20-year record of the Marcos dictatorship in terms of the number of victims of counterrevolutionary violence. In Mindanao, up to a million people have forcibly evacuated their homes due to bombings and attacks, massacres and harassment inflicted by the reactionary military on the

Moro people. Hundreds also fell ill and died in filthy and cramped evacuation centers run by the government.

Estrada has further strengthened the fascist machinery. He has added another 35,000 to the number of CAFGU paramilitary forces. The military has revived and armed anti-communist cults for use against the revolutionary movement. The regime has also whipped up anti-Moro hysteria to encourage the organization of anti-Moro vigilante groups.

In the cities, the violent suppression of the legal democratic movement has markedly worsened. The regime has been routinely breaking strikes and peaceful demonstrations. In June, 15,000 police forces were deployed to suppress protest actions against Estrada's State of the Nation Address. One-hundred nineteen were injured and 35 were arrested in police attacks against the demonstrators. The picket lines of striking Manila Hotel and Light Rail Transit workers were repeatedly dismantled. Demolitions continue unabated, especially in impoverished communities suspected of being revolutionary bases. Surveillance and harassment have intensified not only on leaders and members of progressive organizations but on Estrada's political rivals, especially amid the regime's deepening crisis and the people's growing resistance.

Unabashed puppetry. In May 1998, the Estrada regime once more manifested its unabashed puppetry with the approval by the reactionary Senate of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). Through the VFA

and other military agreements, US troops are allowed unlimited access to any part of the Philippines and use it for military exercises. The US is also free to use any of the country's seaports or airports to transport its troops. The VFA ensures that the Philippines will continue to serve the US' forward deployment strategy where the US maintains troops that

are in a constant state of readiness to launch wars of aggression against any enemy in the Asia-Pacific up to the Middle East, including the Philippines.

Since the VFA was approved, the Estrada regime has had many occasions to prove that it is a loyal puppet of US imperialism.

No less than six military exercises have been launched in the Philippines by US troops since the VFA took effect, including Balikatan 2000 held from January to March 2000. A month before Balikatan was held, successive military operations that victimized Aeta minorities were waged by the AFP in Central Luzon to "clear" the area for the launching of military exercises by its imperialist master's troops. After Balikatan, the puppet government allowed two American soldiers who mauled a driver in Cebu to leave the Philippines without answering for their crime.

In August, two youths (aged 17 and 18) were killed and an 11-year-old boy was wounded when an M79 grenade exploded as they were gathering firewood at the site in Toledo, Cebu where ►



FASCIST STATE ON A RAMPAGE

Desperate to remain in power, the Estrada regime has committed an average of one human rights violation per day. This includes ruthless attacks of the regime on an increasing number of anti-Estrada elements that are a threat to Estrada's stay in office: cases of abduction, harassment of witnesses in the ongoing impeachment trial, violent dispersal of pickets, rallies and other actions of the united anti-Estrada front in the cities.

The continuous implementation of an all-out and destructive counterrevolutionary war in the countryside proves the falsity of the AFP's unilaterally-declared Suspension of Offensive Military Operations or SOMO. Meanwhile, it is clear that the recent promise to release hundreds of political prisoners as a result of a "peace pact" between the government and revisionist renegades is all for show. As of October, records show that a total of 212 political prisoners were being detained in various parts of the country.

Estrada also remains apathetic in granting compensation and indemnification to 9,539 victims of human rights violations during the Marcos dictatorship.

Following are some of the human rights violations perpetrated by the US-Estrada regime from September to December 2000:

December 26. Summary execution of relatives Luis and

Roger dela Cruz by troops of the 54th IB headed by 2Lt. Michael Glen Manansala in Sitio Sangaydi, Barangay Villa Gracia, Maddela, Quirino. The two civilians were shot to death on mere suspicion that they were NPA fighters after soldiers failed to annihilate a group of NPA guerrillas they had encountered in the area.

December 11. Violent dispersal of the picket of the Unyong Cottrell Network Phils.-Metal Industries Inc., by armed guards from a security agency owned by Mayor Oscar Jaro of Imus, Cavite in Trece Martirez, Cavite City and the ruthless shooting of Diosdado Marquez and Primo Fabricante, members of the union opposing the illegal layoff of 41 of Cottrell's 80 workers.

On December 13, the local police of Trece Martirez reinforced the guards to suppress around 150 demonstrators condemning the violent dispersal of the workers'

picket.

November 27. Forced evacuation of around 50 families due to continuous bombing by soldiers of the 2nd ID of sitios Montililian, Bua and Mokahil of Barangay Pandan and sitios Tuquian and Bangkod of Barangay Kaskas, all of Ligao, Albay. This was in retaliation for an NPA raid on a detachment of the 22nd IB in Barangay Kaskas on November 26.

November 20. Murder of Olimpio Jalapit Jr., a broadcaster of RMN in Pagadian City and a known critic of the Estrada regime. Even Jalapit's cousin who witnessed the crime was threatened by the culprits.

November 15. Violent dispersal of a barricade of around 200 workers of the Light Rail Transit and supporters from the youth and workers' sector by elements from the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and PNP and hired guards headed by S/Supt. Manuel Cabigon.

◀ Flash Piston 007 was conducted. Instead of demanding that the US take responsibility for the incident, Malacañang instead offered hush money to the victims' families.

As can be expected from a loyal puppet, the Estrada government has not taken any step to demand that the US clean up the toxic waste left behind by American troops when their military bases in Pampanga and Zambales were dismantled. Meanwhile, at least 126 persons have died and 174 others are seriously ill due to exposure to the toxic waste.

Eighteen military exercises are scheduled for 2001 under the VFA.

As the intensifying crisis rocks not only his regime but the entire reactionary system, Estrada's outright puppetry will all the more become manifest.

THE INTENSIFYING political crisis has accelerated the forging of a broad anti-Estrada front and pushed the regime to extreme isolation. As of this writing, the Estrada regime has virtually become a condemned prisoner drawn closer to his grave with every tick of the clock. ■

FASCIST STATE ON A RAMPAGE

The strikers were truncheoned. Thirteen were arrested and charged with trespassing and malicious mischief.

November 14. Violent dispersal of an anti-Estrada rally of around 50 members of the Philippine Airlines Employees Association or PALEA by the airport police headed by Airport Police Chief Edgar Gatumbao and private guards in the departure area of the NAIA Centennial Terminal II. Workers Jimmy Nakar and George dela Rosa suffered head injuries.

November 12. The massacre of five members of the Eleccio family by an anti-communist armed cult organized by brothers of the notorious Norberto Manero. They shot to death Luzviminda Eleccio, 35 years old; her children Richard, 16; Gemma, 18 and her fiancé Allan Seroco, 34; and Luzviminda's nephew Benjie Sujede, 5 years old, in their house at Barangay Lasak, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat. The lone survivor was the wounded Geronimo Eleccio, Luzviminda's husband and suspected supporter of the revolutionary movement. The Manero brothers also threatened to ambush the priests of Columbio, Sultan Kudarat for allegedly supporting the NPA.

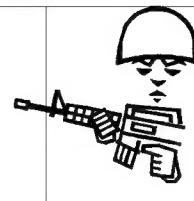
Last week of November. Troops of the 54th IB forced prisoners of war Mar "Ka Mar" Rodriguez and JR "Ka CJ" Bulosan to serve as

guides in military operations. The two are NPA guerrillas captured in Echague, Isabela on November 18.

October 23. Dispersal of more than 50 members of the July 10 Payatas Victims organization (J10PVO) by elements of the SWAT and PNP. The J10PVO was scheduled to hold camp around the Quezon City Hall for a week to protest the continuous delay in the release of the remains of their relatives who died when they were buried under tons of garbage on July 10 at the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City.

Since the third week of November, military and psywar operations have persisted in the countryside, cities and town centers of Cagayan Valley particularly in places where protest actions are usually launched. According to a statement from the Benito Tesorio Command of the NPA in Northeastern Luzon, the AFP and PNP are desperately preventing widespread mass actions against the regime. Along with this, the 270 CAFGU elements in Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino and

Nueva Vizcaya are being fortified and augmented.



Manila, Southern Tagalog and other major towns all over the country are havens for continued surveillance operations. In the latter part of October, the illegal surveillance by members of the AFP on progressive and militant organizations in Southern Tagalog, including the office of the Alyansa sa Pagsusulong ng Karapatan ng Mamamayan sa Timog Katagalugan, was reported. Similarly, the offices of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines in Imus, Cavite and the Katipunan ng Samahang Magbubukid sa Los Baños, Laguna, were blatantly subjected to surveillance. Recently, a group of unknown men barged in, insistently inquiring about the identities of men who frequented these offices.

The AFP's illegal surveillance of the leaders and members of the movement for the ouster of the US-Estrada regime, as well as of anti-Estrada senators and personalities, has been exposed. The targets are subjected to electronic surveillance (through monitoring of telephone conversations, among others) conducted from so-called "war rooms" at Camps Crame and Aguinaldo. **AB**

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UNDER THE US-ESTRADA REGIME FROM JANUARY - NOVEMBER 2000

Human rights violations - 436
Illegal arrest and detention - 85 cases, 269 victims, 1 barangay
Desaparecidos and salvaging - 17 cases, 39 victims
Massacre - 5 incidents, 45 victims, 18 survivors...

... and 321 cases of strafing, frustrated and attempted murder, abduction, harassment, illegal search and looting, coercion, illegal interrogation, bombing, surveillance, sexual abuse, violation of international humanitarian law, evacuation, destruction of property and hamletting, which victimized 39,000 individuals aside from 20 barangays from January to November 2000. (*Data from Karapatan*)

Trouble in the neocolonies

Intense contradictions among factions of the ruling classes and the people's firm opposition and resistance to the corruption and puppetry of those in power continue to shake the puppet reactionary states of Peru, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and other neocolonies.

The trial for the conviction of Philippine president Joseph Estrada, who was charged with bribery and corruption, began on December 7 amid burgeoning street demonstrations calling for his ouster.

In Thailand, the people are condemning the continuing economic decline, massive corruption within the ruling party and the hardships suffered by the people due to government "reforms." The ruling party is expected to lose in the forthcoming elections in January 2001.

Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid, who is only on his 13th month in office, faces bribery charges. This is in addition to many other corruption cases that may most likely lead to an impeachment process. Wahid's predecessor Suharto was forced to resign after being confronted with widespread and violent demonstrations against him last year.

In Taiwan, the opposition is currently taking steps to impeach its president of seven months, Chen Shui-bian for his inability to uplift their economy.

The recent overthrow of Alberto Fujimori, Peru's president for 10 years, was brought about by the Peruvian people's widespread anger. As he was being ousted in Peru, Fujimori remained in Japan in order to evade charges of corruption, bribery and large-scale violations of human rights.

In Eurasia, the illusion of stability that surrounded the newly established

coalition government of Turkey vanished upon the exposition of anomalies involving the new president's family.

The people's armed and unarmed movements are gaining strength. Throngs of people are marching in the streets to demand the immediate resignation of those in power. Moreover, the people's utter disgust with reactionary governments that do not fulfill promises of prosperity and instead further immiserize them is being transformed into a material force.

In the Philippines, the broadest anti-Estrada forces have united to call for Estrada's ouster, condemn his economic policies and assert the rights and welfare of the basic sectors. Simultaneously, revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside is intensifying.

In Indonesia, aside from the broad demonstrations of workers, students and reactionary anti-Wahid politicians, the armed movements in Aceh and Maluku that are fighting for the right to self-determination are gathering support and strength, inspired by victorious liberation struggle of the East Timorese people.

In Peru, the people's legal and armed movements that put an end to Fujimori's fascist rule are expanding. Similarly, the people of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Israel, Colombia, Fiji and Solomon Islands are militantly standing their ground against the fascist policies of reactionaries in power.



Workers' strikes and other people's actions are also erupting from South Korea to Argentina to fight for jobs in the face of the widespread closure of enterprises and high rates of unemployment.

The new disorder wracking the politics of neocolonies of US imperialism is both a product and an exacerbation of the crisis of the world capitalist system. Most of the neocolonial governments are bankrupt due to "neoliberal" policies bannered by imperialism. Because of the grave economic crisis, contradictions among reactionaries have become more bitter not only because the spoils available for division among them have dwindled but because these are being monopolized by the ruling faction.

Graft and corruption are integral to bureaucrat capitalists who are in power in neocolonial states. Part of the bureaucratic corruption of reactionaries include their direct supervision or coddling of cronies and criminal syndicates who contribute immensely to their campaign funds and support their extravagant lifestyle. In the cases of Colombia, Russia and the Philippines, the huge criminal syndicates that run these states are headed by the countries' presidents themselves.

The bureaucratic corruption of its puppets is not unknown to US imperialism, contrary to its "anti-corruption" stance. In fact, the US condones this in exchange for its puppets' devoted observance and implementation of the worst pro-imperialist policies.

It is an easy matter for it to replace any puppet—once its chief minions' misdeeds are exposed and they become obstacles to the interests of imperialism.

US IMPERIALISM is acting fast in order to resolve conflicts among reactionary factions and prevent the upsurge of peoples' movements. As much as possible, those in power are unseated in the swiftest, most discreet way and the succeeding puppet is usually more subservient than its predecessor. With assurances from the US, those who are being ousted resign on their own initiative and in exchange, are absolved of any criminal liability or accommodated by "friendly" countries as in the case of Marcos (who was welcomed by the US), Fujimori (for whom Japan provided refuge) and Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan (who was granted sanctuary by Saudi Arabia).

BUT LIKE THEIR reactionary forerunners, the new puppets are sure to be confronted by the chronic crisis that is intrinsic in neocolonies and by the people's armed and unarmed movements that continue to gain in strength. **AB**

Paving the way for an international league of people's struggles

THE WORLD HAS BEEN WITNESS to the outbreak of peoples' struggles calling for liberation from intensifying poverty, hunger, disorder and injustice, environmental destruction and devastating wars, which all deprive the world's youth of their future. Millions of people continue to advance armed and unarmed struggles—from the guerrilla fronts of the Philippines, Peru and Colombia to the streets of the US, Melbourne, Prague, Paris and London—to fight for the interests of peoples enslaved and oppressed by imperialism.

With the objective of forging unity and cooperation among various struggling peoples, all-out preparations are being made for the establishment of the International League of People's Struggles (ILPS) on May 2001. The ILPS will primarily serve as a forum for the exchange of experiences and cooperation among diverse struggling peoples.

First International Assembly. The International Initiative Committee (IIC) is currently in the thick of preparations for the First International Assembly (FIA), the foremost assembly that shall form the ILPS. It shall be held in May 2001 in The Netherlands. The IIC is led by Jose Ma. Sison, founding chairperson of the CPP and head of the Center for Social Studies, and is composed of representatives from Germany, the Philippines, Mexico, Britain, Turkey and various other international institutions.

The FIA carries the theme "Peoples' Demands for International Unity in the 21st Century". Declarations drafted by the IIC shall be discussed and approved during the assembly. The FIA shall also ratify the objectives of the ILPS and shall draft resolutions that will detail the league's tasks.

The IIC is initially organizing the FIA by assiduously gathering comments on, and support for, the assembly,



systematizing details including the registration of participants, drafting proposed policies and presenting proposals for the preparations.

Proposed characteristics. According to its preparatory committee, the ILPS is for both industrialized and backward countries; for those confronting any environmental tragedy, poisoned water or food, or all those who suffer from intensifying exploitation, job destruction or loss, absence of aid or any human rights violation and a host of other crises.

Based on the declarations drafted by the IIC, the ILPS shall be broad and mass-oriented in character and independent from any political party, government or religion. It shall promote, advocate and develop the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles of workers and oppressed peoples of the world in order to do battle against the ideological, political, military, economic and cultural dominance and attacks of imperialism and reactionaries that cause humanity's various hardships. It shall also expose and oppose the inhuman policies and actions of multinational companies, their governments and international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization and military alliances.

According to the draft declarations, the ILPS shall act in order to achieve the unity, cooperation and coordination of workers, unions and organizations of women, children, farmers, teachers, health workers, journalists, writers, scientists, technologists, lawyers and other professionals, popular movements, campaigns and just foundations that shall uphold the league's concerns when formed and finalized.

Broadening and growing in number. As of October, more than 90 organizations



NEWS OF STRUGGLE

NUEVA VIZCAYA MUNICIPAL HALL RAIDED

Seven M16s, two M14s, two 9 mm pistols, one .45 caliber pistol and several communications equipment were confiscated by the New People's Army (NPA) when it raided the municipal hall of Santa Fe, Nueva Vizcaya around noon of December 23.

A platoon of Red fighters was able to enter the premises of the municipal hall by playing a ruse. A firefight ensued for a few minutes between the NPA and the five policemen manning the nearby PNP headquarters, killing a policeman and wounding Santa Fe PNP Chief P/Chief Insp. Narciso Paragas.

8 FIREARMS CONFISCATED IN QUEZON RAID

Six M16 rifles and one Llama pistol were confiscated when the NPA raided a police station in the town of Agdangan, Quezon on December 5. Without firing a single shot, the Red fighters were also able to confiscate one VHF radio, one UHF radio and 700 rounds of ammunition of various calibers.

Meanwhile, another NPA team raided the house of a retired soldier situated near the police station and confiscated his .45 caliber pistol.

The Red fighters who conducted the raid arrived aboard two dump trucks.

had stated their intention to participate in the first assembly. Before the end of November, the number of organizations had increased to 217 from about 50 countries. According to the IIC, this reflects the unity and cooperation of all the organizations that participated in or supported the preparations of the IIC from the beginning. The IIC also added that after its fifth meeting in October, it has become more "determined to accelerate its efforts to further increase the number of participating and supporting organizations." **AB**

PALAWAN POLICE DETACHMENT RAIDED

The NPA conducted a raid against a PNP detachment in Puerto Princesa, Palawan on the morning of December 26. The Red fighters confiscated one M16 rifle and a 9 mm pistol from the lone policeman manning the detachment.

SERIES OF PUNITIVE ACTIONS LAUNCHED

Four punitive actions were launched by the NPA in Laguna, Mindoro and Tarlac this December.

On December 17 in Laguna, Red fighters punished SPO3 Francisco Garcia, deputy police chief of Mabitac. Garcia was on his way to his farm when ambushed by the NPA.

In Mindoro Occidental, the NPA meted out revolutionary justice on SPO1 Ernesto Dacula last December 13. Dacula was a notorious bodyguard of despotic landlord Ricardo Quintos.

Based on a correspondence report from *Kalatas* (revolutionary mass paper in Southern Tagalog), P/Sr. Insp. Edison Atienza, former chief of police was also punished in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro. Atienza was punished because of his blood debts against the revolutionary movement, his active participation in military operations against the NPA and for being a protector of illegal activities. Atienza's most recent crime was the execution of *hors d'combat* J.

Proposed concerns of the ILPS that shall serve as workshop topics during the first international assembly

- National and social liberation from imperialism and all reaction;
- Human rights in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural fields;
- The cause of peace against wars of aggression and against nuclear and other genocidal weapons;
- Workers' rights and reduction of working hours at full pay against mass unemployment and decreasing wage levels;
- Rights of peasants, farm workers and fisherfolk against feudal and semifeudal exploitation and oppression;
- Women's rights against gender discrimination and children's rights against child labor and other forms of exploitation;
- Rights of indigenous peoples and nationalities against chauvinism and racism;
- The rights of teachers and the youth;
- Environmental protection against plunder and pollution; and
- Rights and welfare of refugees and migrant workers.



Tresvalles (Ka Joker) on August 3.

In Tarlac, Marcelo Guiang was punished in the town of Mayantoc. Guiang was the leader of a holdup syndicate that victimizes travellers passing through the towns of eastern Tarlac.

SOMO VIOLATIONS REPORTED IN CAGAYAN

The revolutionary movement in Cagayan Valley exposed the falsity of the Suspension of Offensive Military Operations or SOMO declared by the Estrada regime that was supposed to have begun on December 9. In a press statement on December 14, Salvador del Pueblo, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army and National Democratic Front in Cagayan Valley, stated that combat operations of the 5th Infantry Division that began on November 13, continue.

Currently conducting combat operations are three platoons of the 41st IB in West Baggage-Alcala, Cagayan; two platoons of the 41st IB in Zinundungan Valley, Rizal, Cagayan; five platoons of the 54th IB in the towns of Jones, Echague and San Agustin in Isabela; one platoon of the 5th ID Reconnaissance Coy in Jones, Isabela; two platoons of the 54th IB in Maddela, Quirino; two platoons of the 54th IB in Dupax-Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya; and four platoons of the 45th IB in San Mariano, Isabela.

Del Pueblo also said that part of the operations involved the largescale recruitment and training of CAFGU elements.

Meanwhile, del Pueblo condemned the AFP for forcing two captured NPA fighters (Mar "Ka Mar" Rodriguez and JR "Ka CJ" Bulusan) to become guides in enemy operations. Ka Mar and Ka CJ were captured on November 18 in Madadamian, Echague, Isabela. In an open letter for the 5th ID on December 11, Del Pueblo challenged the leadership of the Army Division to recognize the two as prisoners of war, who come under the care and protection of the rules of war

and international humanitarian law.

GRP-RPA-ABB AGREEMENT CONDEMNED

The Communist Party of the Philippines in Negros (CPP-Negros) condemned the "peace agreement" between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB).

In a statement, the CPP-Negros said that only the relatives of Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., Salvador Benedicto mayor Cynthia dela Cruz and her husband Nehemias and RPA-ABB leaders Arturo Tabara and Nilo dela Cruz would benefit from the agreement. The signing of the agreement on December 10 in the town of Salvador Benedicto, said the CPP-Negros, which was witnessed by Cojuangco and Joseph Estrada was a "grand reunion of warlords and gangsters".

Cojuangco, Tabara's patron and who mediated in the forging of the agreement, is a notorious warlord and despotic landlord in Negros, while Tabara and dela Cruz are involved in gangster activities such as bank holdups.

The agreement stipulates that the Estrada regime would supposedly allot P500 million for projects to be specified by Tabara and his clique.

NO CEASEFIRE THIS CHRISTMAS – CPP

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, national spokesperson of the CPP, stated that the CPP and NPA will not declare a ceasefire this Christmas in accordance with the decision of the leadership of the two revolutionary organizations.

Ka Roger said in a press statement on December 4 that all NPA units were ordered to continue and further intensify tactical offensives against the US-Estrada regime as a response to the widespread clamor of the people to intensify all forms of struggle in order to put an end to the despicable government. Red fighters were also



NEWS OF STRUGGLE

ordered to give special attention to punitive actions against the biggest and worst thieves, plunderers and oppressors of the people.

ARMED STRUGGLE CONTINUES TO REAP VICTORIES IN BICOL.

According to the most recent statement of the Romulo Jalores Command of Bicol, 16 more tactical offensives were launched from September to November aside from those already reported by *Ang Bayan*:

- Raid by an NPA company against the police headquarters and municipal hall of Caramoan, Camarines Sur on November 18. A policeman and a CAFGU element were killed and two other policemen were wounded. The NPA confiscated firearms and other military, communications and office equipment.
- Punitive action by an NPA team on November 17 against SPO1 Ronilo Hermosa, a notorious policeman in Barangay Curbada, Cataingan, Masbate. Before this, on November 16, the NPA in Masbate also punished a notorious policeman who had committed grave crimes against the people and the revolutionary movement.
- Ambush against troops of the 202nd Bde who were aboard a Kennedy-type jeep in Barangay Peñafrancia, Daraga, Albay, on November 13. Three sergeants were killed and two other soldiers were wounded
- Punishment on November 8 of T/Sgt. Regino Satur, intelligence officer of the 203rd Bde responsible for a long list of crimes against the people and the revolutionary movement. This included organizing an informer network in the towns of San Lorenzo Ruiz, San Vicente and Labo, Camarines Norte; leading combat and psywar operations that destroyed the homes of, and terrorized innocent civilians suspected of being NPA supporters in the barangays of Mahawan-hawan, Benit, Bautista, Iberica, Mabilo II and San Antonio, all of Camarines Norte; and involvement in illegal drug, gambling and logging syndicates.
- Punishment on November 2 of Fernando Bernardino, notorious informer who served as the 31st IB's guide in raiding an NPA camp in Sitio Maniknik, Pag-aso, Labo, Camarines Norte, where five comrades were slain and three were captured.
- Ambush on November 1 against SPO1 Antonio Rico Yansana, a policeman in Castilla, Sorsogon, and the confiscation of his M16 rifle, 9 mm pistol and ammunition.
- Raid on October 29 on the house of SPO3 Claro Dumalaon in the town of Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon, and the confiscation of his M16 rifle and 9 mm pistol.
- Punishment of Manuel Herang, an informer, in Barangay San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte, on October 27.
- Ambush on October 24 by an NPA squad against SPO1 Romeo Pielago and SPO3 Abrajam Sibulo, notorious PNP elements in Pasacao, Camarines Sur. The two policemen died on the spot; two 9 mm pistols were confiscated from them.
- Raid on October 17 by an NPA squad on the house of SPO1 Tomas Halog in Sorsogon. An M16, 10 magazines of M16 bullets and 80 rounds of cal .45 ammunition were seized.
- Harassment on October 16 by an NPA team against the detachment of the "C" Coy of the 2nd IB in Barrio Bato, Bacon, Sorsogon. One soldier died.
- Ambush by an NPA squad against T/Sgt. Joel Alarcio, intelligence officer of the 2nd IB on October 6 in Barangay Aroroy, Juban, Sorsogon.
- Punishment by the NPA on September 3 of German Beruega, active CAFGU element belonging to the "A" Coy of the 42nd IB operating in Panaytayan, Ragay, Camarines Sur.
- Ambush against SPO2 Agapito Milor and the confiscation of his cal .45 pistol in Castilla, Sorsogon, in September.